

Idaho Trade Token Newsletter

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News

There was a Miner's Brewery and Bakery token in a mail bid sale in NATCA's October, 1998 **Talkin' Tokens**: "Idaho's earliest token - first found in 1962, six pieces known. Joe Levine sold a VF for \$632.50. Letters are soft, [soft strike?]; grease stains on both sides." After the sale was over, I e-mailed the seller to see if I could find the price realized. The reply I got was "The Miners Brewery piece only drew very low bids (less than \$200) and was withdrawn. [The seller] has set a \$1,100 minimum price."

Speaking of NATCA, it is time to remind readers that there are several national organizations that many Idaho collectors have joined. Let me know if you would like information on joining them. NATCA, the National Token Collectors Association, publishes the monthly **Talkin' Tokens** and an annual membership directory for \$25 per year. TACT, The Active Token Collector, publishes the **National Token and Collectible Trader** 11 months yearly for \$27. TAMS, the Token and Medal Society, publishes the bi-monthly **TAMS Journal**, plus occasional supplements for \$20 per year. There are others, but these are the three most widely-read by Idaho token collectors. My feeling is that you should also support your local and state historical societies, libraries, and other groups interested in historical preservation in its many forms. Contact me for details, opinions, etc.

Dean Rasmussen displayed the typical sharp eyes and wits of a true token finder by pointing out that in the last **ITTN** I said the O. B. Truesdale piece, BO-182, was round when the picture clearly showed it to be octagonal.

Snake River Hoard by Greg Manos

Greg e-mailed me the following "to set the history straight on the Central Drug Co. tokens. As far as I recall (since I bought many of the Idaho tokens from the Utah outhouse hoard), there were none of these in the Utah outhouse token hoard. However I know who John Gold got these from since I also got some of these from the very same person. About 20-25 years ago, a scuba diver found a location in the Idaho Falls river where tokens were dumped! He went back several times and got what he could. Recovery was tough because of the darkness, swift currents, and he had to find most of them by feel. [Imagine the possibilities with a good diver and an underwater detector or dredge...I hope to get more information on the exact spot some day]. He traded off some of the extras to John Gold (and others). Back in the 1980's, he decided to sell one day when I was visiting/trading with him and I believe that I bought everything. I have some mavericks that are numerous that came from this river hoard but just have initials but are probably Idaho Falls. This is also where the Raymond dairy token was found. And since I saw the milk can with tag that said "Raymond dairy Idaho Falls Idaho", I believe this to be Idaho Falls (and NOT Raymond, Idaho as was speculated). The dumping of these tokens I am sure is related to slot machines as I would guess that 99% were 21mm round (many "slugs" were also found). The other 1% [or less] were quarter-sized tokens/slugs. There were some out of state tokens but I would estimate that to be less than 1%. Anyway, this is why there are so many Idaho Falls tokens that are in "dug" (actually should be "river") condition."

A Tale of Three Cities (Towns)

Charles Clinton Amos was born in Clinton County, Indiana on October 19, 1875, son of John W. and Naomi Wyncoop Amos who were also natives of Clinton County. His middle name derives from some Indiana history. According to Clayton's 1913 **The History of Clinton County, Indiana**, when the county was formed canals were **the** important new way to transport products. Because Indiana was ablaze with enthusiasm over canals and the county naturally hoped to have a canal built through it, the county was named after Dewitt Clinton, the canal-building governor of New York.

Amos (or perhaps his father or other relative) ran the Amos Club in Frankfort, IN. Wagaman's IN book lists a round, brass token, AMOS CLUB / FRANKFORT, IND. with a 5 on the reverse. Charles Amos, his wife Laura, and their son, Frenche H. "Bud", moved to Troy, Idaho in 1911 or 1912.



There, Amos opened the Amos Club that was listed in the directories as "cigars, confectionery, pool, billiards, and restaurant". From there is a 21mm, round, brass token, AMOS CLUB / TROY, / IDAHO. // GOOD FOR / 5¢ / IN TRADE. I know of 3 examples of this one. Unfortunately the piece I have photographed is worn too badly to show well in a picture; if anyone has a good example, I would like to borrow it to photograph. Interestingly, he must have brought some of the Indiana tokens with him as at least one was found by a metal detector in Troy, Idaho.

Young Frenche H. Amos graduated with the Class of 1919 from the Troy High School. His father supported the school with this ad in the yearbook, the **Ee-dah-how**. In 1922, Amos moved north to Burke, Idaho and became proprietor of the Canyon Drug Store there. Again, Amos used tokens in his business. This 21mm round, brass piece, CANYON DRUG STORE / BURKE, / IDAHO, // GOOD FOR / 6¼¢ / IN TRADE is known in two examples only. This "half bit" denomination was popular in Shoshone County due to higher costs there.



In late 1925, Charles Amos contracted pneumonia and died of heart failure brought on by the ailment on December 8, 1925. He was buried in the Wallace cemetery and was survived by his wife and son.

Men & Mines of the Coeur d'Alene Mining District by Mike Fritz [with credit to **The Ballyhoo Bonanza, Charles Sweeny and the Idaho Mines** by John Fahey, 1971]

Often the history of a man and the company he builds are so entwined as to become inseparable. Such are these two: Charles Sweeny and the Last Chance Mining Company.

Charles Sweeny was born in 1849. By lying about his age and name, he served the Union Army in the Civil War and then drifted to Mexico, California, Nevada, Oregon, and then to Spokane, Washington.

Sweeny arrived in Spokane during January of 1881. Here, as a merchant, he sold \$3,000 worth of goods to Willard Endicott, who had come north in response to a letter from Andrew Pritchard. During the ensuing rush to the new area around Eagle City, Idaho, Sweeny had acquired most of the townsite of Eagle by 1884. By September of that year, he had sold most of his claims, lots, and store, and moved to Murrayville (Murray), and in 1886 to the South Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River.



Here, the Bunker Hill & Sullivan vein had been staked. As the direction of the vein had not been determined, other claims were staked along the supposed course. Among these were the Tyler, Stemwinder, Last Chance, and others. Because the Last Chance was on the same side of Milo Gulch as the Bunker Hill, it was regarded as a potential treasure. In April, 1886, Sweeny and others bought the Last Chance claim. The claim went through several ownerships, until the Last Chance Mining Company was organized September 26, 1889.

From 1889 until 1896, Sweeny and the Last Chance Mining Co. were involved in lawsuits [several ending up in the United States Supreme Court], the Miner's War of 1892, stock promotions, but relatively little ore production.

To raise capital to pay the debts of the mining company and to restore the mine to production on a scale that would assure profit, a bond was proposed. In January, 1896, gold bonds, backed by a mortgage on the Last Chance Mining Co., bearing 6% interest, were issued. These bonds were issued in a series of 940. Of these, 370 were of \$1000 each, 270 were \$100 each, and 300 were \$10 each. In addition, these bonds were secured by deposit of 440,000 shares of Shoshone Mining Company stock, and were held in trust by the Spokane and Eastern Trust Company.

The Shoshone claim was an unusual one. During development of the Last chance in August 1885, mineral was discovered at the 1200 foot level, only outside the Last chance claim. Unlike prospectors who posted claims on exposed mineral at the surface level, owners of the Last chance found ore underground, followed it to the surface, and then staked the claim. The Shoshone Mining company was formed with the same men as directors as the Last Chance.

Of the \$400,000 raised by the sale of bonds, only \$15,000 went to the Last Chance Mining Company. Most of the rest went to various creditors. About a year after issue, creditors petitioned for permission to sell the securities for fifty cents on the dollar. The Bunker Hill & Sullivan showed some interest which may have prodded Sweeny to pay the interest due in April, 1897 from his own pocket. Finally on January 19, 1898, Sweeny and Lewis Clark obtained the bonds for less than 55% of their face value.



During the latter half of 1898, a new company was formed, the Empire State - Idaho, with Sweeny and Clark as principal stockholders. It purchased virtually every important lode property not controlled by the Bunker Hill & Sullivan, including the Last Chance, in the Wardner area. Early in 1900, Sweeny and Clark ended their partnership, with Clark owning the real estate and Sweeny the mining properties. The Empire State - Idaho continued to enlarge and consolidate, with Sweeny as

Chairman of the Board. In the summer of 1901 the company was able to build and partially equip a mill at Sweeny, located on the railroad one half mile west of Kellogg.

With the intent to control all mining in the Coeur d'Alenes, the Federal Mining & Smelting Co. was organized in 1903, with the financial backing of George Gould and John D. Rockefeller. Of course, Charles Sweeny was president. In 1905, American Smelters Securities Co. was formed and one of the first mining companies acquired by the smelting trust was the Federal. Federal went on to

merge all but two of the district's major mines, and became one of the largest lead and silver mining companies in the world. In January of 1909 at the age of 60, Charles Sweeny resigned as president of Federal.



Only one token is known from this town. It is the 21mm brass #SWE-1: SWEENEY GROCERY / SWEENEY, / IDAHO // GOOD FOR / 5 / ¢ // IN TRADE.

More on Cleaning by Dan Lute

When I completed the recent article on cleaning tokens with electrolysis I referred to a process called toning. Toning required reversing the polarity on the process and redepositing some of the junk that had been removed, in order to give the token a little "patina" if it had turned out too bright. There is a product out there called "JAX" that contains patina producing agents that can be used to accomplish the same results. When I say "out there" it is because I haven't been able to find any of this material. There are several different colors available someplace that will produce different effects. For copper, brass and bronze there is Green Patina, Gold Finish, Brown Darkener, Black Darkener, and finally a Pewter Darkener that can be used on these metals. This product is supposed to be available in 16 oz. bottles for around \$7.50 at jewelers supply and sculpture supply outlets. I haven't found anyone around Boise that knows a thing about it so if anyone locates it I would appreciate knowing where to get it. Since I haven't tried it I will not recommend it; I advise a word of caution if anyone locates the product to experiment on junk tokens. One other thing I wanted to discuss was a subject John had mention to me some time ago about cleaning aluminum tokens with vinegar. An article showed up in a treasure hunting magazine some time ago about a fellow who found a hoard of aluminum California tokens and cleaned them by wrapping them in aluminum foil submersed in a vinegar bath. I am not sure of the need to use aluminum foil to make this work but I did as suggested and tried the process with good results. Rather than wrapping the tokens I just made a little dish of the foil, poured in some vinegar and let the token soak for 2-3 minutes. I then used a soft suede brass brush on the token and resubmitted it to the vinegar bath. After about three cycles I was able to remove just about all the black and brown crud that had built up on the token over the years of being buried. I can suggest using this process for aluminum pieces based on my success. Be sure not to let the token soak too long or you may develop some pitting on the surface. One other variation of this process that I heard about and tried was to use a solution of 2 parts catsup and one part vinegar. I didn't see much difference in the end product. Well, good luck finding and cleaning those hard to find Idaho tokens.

Levy's Alley

Last month I mentioned the article Dan Lute found about the goings-on in Boise's Levy's Alley. While surfing the Internet, I found that the **Boise Weekly** has an archive of articles they have published. This one can be found by going to their site and searching the archive for the word Levy. <http://www.boiseweekly.com> is the url. You can read the entire text from that point. Try it! Dan does have some extra print copies; contact him if you are interested.

The Headquarters

There are a number of information sources used for researching tokens. We are familiar with the directories (Polk's City Directories, Dun & Bradstreet commercial ratings books, and telephone directories), newspapers, official records, and so on. One of the sources I like is the yearbooks published by the various high schools and colleges. Often there are advertisements in the back for local businesses. The Amos Confectionery ad in the article above is an example. I recently added to my collection of University of Idaho yearbooks, the **Gem of the Mountains**. In addition to seeing college days photos of a prominent Idaho token collector, I found this photo ad from Lewiston in the 1949 edition.

Bailey's 1948 Lewiston City Directory lists the Headquarters, owned by Howard W. and Gladys Snyder, under beer taverns although the photo in the **Gem** ad appears to be of a lunch counter. By 1953 the business was listed as the Headquarters cigar store, K. E. Painter, owner and Edgar Johnson, manager. The alphabetical section lists Karl E. Painter as owner of the Sacajawea Lodge and partner in the Headquarters with James P. Painter.



In 1956 the directory showed a confusing cast of characters: Carl R., Karl E., and Paul James Painter were partners in the Headquarters Cigar Store and Cafe, and E. L. Johnson was owner of the Headquarters Lunch. There is a doubt in my mind about the validity of these three people named Painter. The 1958 directory showed that Karl Painter had died and James was now (appropriately enough) a painter. The Head Quarters Lunch was owned by partners Edgar L. and Orville J. Johnson. Later listings showed that Edgar L. Johnson was known as "Polly".



I believe the tokens from this business were obtained in quantity by Gene Kirschten in about 1970. Most are in uncirculated condition. They bear the mark of the Schaaf Company of Minneapolis on both sides. Another unusual aspect of this series (catalogued as #LEWI-26) is that the denominations are 5¢, 10¢, 12½¢, and 25¢, with the 12½¢ one being brass to distinguish it from the others which are aluminum.

My guess is that these pieces date from the late 1940s and that the Headquarters consisted of both a cigar store and lunch counter in one storefront. More research will be needed to determine whether there were slot machines and card and pool tables as well, but I suspect there were.

Hinkey vs. Hickey

Hal Dunn wrote me about the two words. He pointed out that there is a piece from "The Hickey Joint" in Blair, Nevada. Hal also recalls early Nevada collectors Jack Berry and Jim Schaeffer using the term, which Hal understood to be "hickey". I remember Boise coin collector Ivan Fitzwater once telling me (in no uncertain terms) that it was "hinkey". Maybe hinkey is just a Boise word?

A McCall Maverick

Some years ago I got a batch of mavericks which came from the Boise River. One 21mm brass piece showed "river condition" badly, but I listed it as a TAMS maverick anyway. I was pleased when Greg Manos supplied an attribution from the 1920 and 1921 Dun & Bradstreet directories. They both listed Clyde E. Fulton as confectionery and billiards in McCall, ID. This nice example just landed in Dan Lute's collection.



A search in the files of the **Payette Lake Star** from McCall shows no ads from Fulton. One note in the June 18, 1920 issue states "James Mitchell, known all over this section of Idaho, has opened a barber shop in the Fulton Pool Hall, where he will be pleased to meet all his old friends, and many new ones." The next week, on the 25th of June, was "Mrs. Clyde Fulton, mother of Mrs. Riemers of Portland, has just received the news of the birth of a daughter to the latter". The only other record I have found on Fulton was that he stated that he was born on August 27, 1890 when he registered for the draft in the First World War. Certainly more information will be found on this person; perhaps he will "turn up" in another location.

Digital Camera?

I am trying to figure a way to get a digital camera to take close-up token pictures. Do any of you have experience with them? Results with a scanner are less than satisfactory, due [I believe] to the need to have light coming in from an angle to pick up all the relief possible. A scanner is designed to work best with print on paper, and uses reflected light coming from straight on.

There are many digital cameras on the market, but most are designed to take snapshots rather than close-ups. If you have any thoughts on this subject, please let me know.

Best regards,

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